

Chancellorsville and Gettysburg

By JOHN McELROY.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE FORTRESS MONROE GENERAL.

They Make a Sad Batch of Taking Advantage of Richmond's Defenseless Condition—Dix and Keyes Waste a Great Opportunity—Gen. Meade's Stopped From Offense Operations Against Lee—The Army of the Potomac Loses Two Corps.

Marches and Maneuvers.

The fire in the rear, started by the Confederate emissaries, was exceedingly disturbing to the Administration. The troubles in New York were echoed by resistance to the drafting and enrolling officers in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, and these had a numbing effect upon the operations at the front. The peace had been restored in New York city, it was felt that more troops were needed to give assurance against future outbreaks, and Gordon's or Schenck's Division of the Cavalry and the Eleventh Corps was sent to Alexandria.



GEN. DIX.

to go to New York, but was there met by orders to reinforce Gen. Gilmore in front of Charleston. Gilmore thought he had a chance to take the city if he only had a few more troops, and the moral effect of this would have been prodigious. Instead, therefore, of this division, 10,000 men were selected from the various corps and sent to New York under command of Gen. Ayres and Ruger. This greatly depleted the aggressive force of the army.

Gen. Meade was informed that he would have to limit himself for a time to threatening demonstrations. Aug. 1, Meade sent Gen. Buford with his division of cavalry across the Rappahannock toward Culpeper, to gain information as to Lee's whereabouts and dispositions. Shortly after crossing, Buford encountered Hampton's and Jones's Brigades, commanded by Stuart in person, who resented Buford's inquisitive journey and put up a sharp fight to detain him. It was another battle in which the Northern horsemen showed to advantage what they had gained by drill and organization. The regiment were kept well in hand and charged home with the sabre, driving their enemies before them in spite of the most valorous resistance. The sabre, which had been found to be so valuable a weapon at Brandy Station, was used with great effect to the discomfort of the Confederates, and Buford succeeded in driving Stuart back to within one and a half miles of Culpeper.



CAMP LIFE AT CULPEPER, VA.

The situation then became so serious for the Confederates that A. P. Hill sent out Anderson's Division to reinforce the cavalry, whereupon it was Buford's play to retire in as good order as possible. The infantry, with three batteries, pressed hard upon Buford, but he reached and recrossed the Rappahannock, taking with him his prisoners. In this affair he lost 21 killed, 104 wounded, and 20 missing, but inflicted a still heavier loss upon the enemy. This demonstration seemed to give Lee the idea that the Army of the Potomac was resuming the offensive, and that he had better take up a more defensive position behind the Rappahannock, where he could cover Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg, which he could not do at Culpeper. Therefore, the next day he moved his whole army behind the Rappahannock, and sent a cavalry division to watch the Union's movements.

The only other operation that broke the quiet of the last month of August was a successful expedition by Kilpatrick's cavalry. The Confederates had sent two regiments in Chesapeake Bay, and hidden them in one of the swamps of the lower Rappahannock. The Union cavalry sent to find them, and Kilpatrick's Division, under the command of Gen. Custer,

ter, rode down the Rappahannock to assist, with the Second Corps, under the command of Gen. Warren, marching to Falmouth to support it. The two vessels were found at Port Conway and destroyed by artillery fire from the opposite bank, whereupon the troops returned to their quiet camps under the spreading oaks of the plain of Manassas.

To Crush Rosecrans.

Lee and Jefferson Davis kept themselves well informed as to the depletion of the Army of the Potomac, and Davis matured a plan to suddenly reinforce Gen. Bragg, and catching Rosecrans's army "tangled" in the mountains around Chattanooga, crush and destroy it and roll the tide of invasion back to the Ohio. This was an ambitious plan, and promised a success that would retrieve Gettysburg and Vicksburg, and restore the morale of the Southern Confederacy.

Davis threw every energy into the preparation for this achievement. The troops which had been surrendered to Gen. Grant at Vicksburg were declared exchanged and ordered to Gen. Bragg, the conscription law was put into even more drastic operation to bring every man into the army. Mobile and other points on the Gulf coast were stripped of their garrisons, and finally, it was decided, in view of the quiescent disposition of the Army of the Potomac, to go to the length of detaching Gen. Longstreet's entire corps and sending it thru by rail, post haste. At that time such a reinforcement looked easy and practicable. The railroad passing thru the camps on the Rapidan ran thru Virginia and East Tennessee to Chattanooga, so that Longstreet could be rushed thru to Bragg before Rosecrans could be reinforced over the long line of single track railroad from Cincinnati and Louisville by which he had advanced on Chattanooga.

On the other hand, Gen. Burnside was making the long delayed movement into East Tennessee which would cut that railroad, and before Longstreet was ready to start had actually entered East Tennessee and gained possession of the road. This compelled Longstreet to make a long circuit around thru the Carolinas to Augusta, Ga., and then thru Atlanta, Dalton and Ringgold. There were two roads between Richmond and Augusta, but only a single track from Augusta to Chattanooga. The distance from Orange Court House to Chattanooga by the way of Bristol and Knoxville was only 540 miles, and it was hoped that the movement could be made in four days. By the occupation of East Tennessee by Burnside, and the cutting of that line, the distance by the way of Petersburg, Wilmington, Augusta and Atlanta was increased to 925 miles, and required about eight days' travel.

Halleck Taken by Surprise.

The Confederate reports are full of complaints as to the tardiness with which the movement of Longstreet to Bragg was begun and carried out, yet even the alleged clumsiness and slowness were too much for Halleck's astuteness. One naturally thinks that Halleck would have kept himself thoroughly well informed at all times of great movements within the Southern Confederacy, and that he should have been especially on the lookout to prevent Rosecrans from being overwhelmed in the manner that Davis contemplated. The very report reported that Longstreet had been detached from Lee, Halleck placed no credence in these reports, and at last made himself determined to verify them by an offensive movement to beat up Lee's headquarters and discover where he was and who were with him.

The departure of Longstreet and the numerous furloughs which had been granted had reduced Lee's effective force to about 40,000. Meade received news that considered reliable of Longstreet's departure on Sept. 11.

He decided upon an immediate offensive movement, but the scattered position of his forces compelled him to wait for concentration. Kilpatrick's Division of Cavalry was at Falmouth, and it was necessary that he should be present to make certain of clearing away Stuart's horsemen. Kilpatrick got up on the 12th, and early on the morning of the 13th was on the left at Kelly's Ford, while Buford's Division was in the center at Rappahannock Bridge, to cut off retreat. Gregg and Buford had no difficulty in driving the two brigades, but when Kilpatrick dashed to the rear he found his galloping troopers stopped by that ugliest of all obstacles to the cavalryman, a deep, wide, steep-sided ditch. This saved the train which was just leaving the station, and enabled the Confederates to get away with no other loss than a large number of prisoners and three pieces of artillery. Custer was then in the pursuit and gathered up many prisoners, but was himself wounded.

This cleared the whole country between the Rappahannock and the Rapidan of the enemy, and the cavalry took possession of all the crossings of the latter river. Gregg took position at Rapidan Station, Buford went lower down on the Rapidan, while Kilpatrick held the right toward James City.

Gen. Meade at once had the railroad bridge across the Rappahannock repaired, advanced his headquarters to the Culpeper Court House, and moved the main part of his army across the Rappahannock in a favorable position along the Rapidan.

He had completed these dispositions by Sept. 15, and was ready for further aggression, when he was checked by orders from Halleck to remain on the defensive, as there were portentous

clouds gathering in the West which gave the Administration much apprehension. The time Halleck, and not Meade, was to have the Army of the Potomac to win a great and crowning victory. It would have been better, far better, to have allowed Meade to do this full and complete work, and to have allowed the Army of the Potomac to win a great and crowning victory. It would have been better, far better, to have allowed Meade to do this full and complete work, and to have allowed the Army of the Potomac to win a great and crowning victory.

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and Gregg was on the right at Sulphur Springs. The Second Corps moved up to support Buford, while the other corps were disposed to take advantage of any development that the rest of the cavalry might make.

The Confederates were guarding the line of the Rappahannock with two brigades, commanded by Gen. Lomax and Col. Beale.

Another Brilliant Cavalry Fight.

Only pickets were maintained near the river, and the main body of the Confederate cavalry was at Culpeper Court House. Gen. Lomax, who was in command, got wind of the proposed advance, and began sending his stores at Culpeper across the Rapidan. He dispatched parties on all the roads to hold the Federals back until the stores could be removed to a place of safety.

He found this close, sharp work, however, as for once the cavalry was moving in exact union, and the Confederates were speedily swept back on their right. Buford, without halting, marched straight over the familiar ground to the old battlefield at Brandy Station, and Gregg promptly swung in on his right, while Kilpatrick came up but little later on his left. Everyone knew well the battleground, for they had crossed sabers with the enemy upon it several times since the beginning of the year. The cavalry advanced in the battle directly upon Culpeper, while Lomax had his battery at work to arrest the advance until he could complete the removal of his stores. While the other two divisions engaged the front Kilpatrick moved toward the left

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